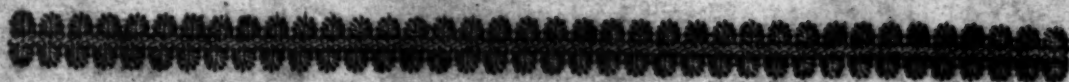


THE
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T A L E
O F
My Lord the O W L,
Told by the
BLACKBIRD.

*Parve, nec invideo, sine me liber ibis in urbem,
Hei mihi quod domino non licet ire tuo ! OVID. de Trist.*



L O N D O N:
Printed in the Year 1718.

I-H-F

T A L E

O F

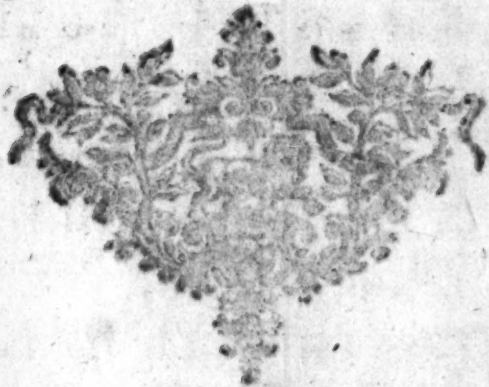
My Lord the O W L

Told by the

BLACKBIRD.



Hei mibi quod hemino non licet ire tuo! Ovid. de Trist.
Pueri, nec mirides, sine me liber, ipsis in arboribus



L O N D O N
Printed in the Year 1718.



T H E T A L E

O F
My L O R D the O W L, &c.



NEAR to an ancient Country Seat,
A BLACKBIRD once had a Retreat,
Where he was wont to sit and sing
His grateful Welcome to the Spring,
And as he rang'd the Garden round,
To try what Food was to be found,
He chanc'd to spy in a cool Shade
An O W L that late a Lord was made:
The Bird, who long had wish'd to see
This Embleme of new Dignity,
Flew to the Tree on which he sat,
And thus begins his friendly Chat.

My Lord, for so you're call'd, I hear,
If you'll vouchsafe a gentle Ear,
I have a Word or two to say,
May do you good another Day:

Since

Since by strange Turns of diff'rent Fate
 You're plac'd among the *Birds* of State;
 Oft in your Thoughts these Words repeat,
 'Tis easy to be Good when Great;
 Fortune may change, and you may fall
 Below your first *Original*;
 Therefore be sure betimes to fence
 Against Revolts of *Providence*.

Keep *Truth* and *Justice* in your View,
 Those will preserve and guide you too,
 And give you an *Illustrious Name*,
 Large as your Wish, lasting as Fame.
 What signifies an empty Word?
 'Tis *Virtue* only makes the *Lord*,
 And wanting that the rest is nought
 But a vain *Title* dearly bought:
 And, Sir, if you'll take this from me,
 There's nothing like *Humility*.

Humility has pow'rful Charms,
 That *Pride* and *Envy* too disarms,
 Unstings *Revenge*, makes *Anger* tame,
 And gives an *Upstart* a good Name:
 On t'other Hand, *Pride* and *Disdain*
 A gen'ral *Scorn* and *Hatred* gain,
 And sink the *Fools*, tho' mounted high,
 Below *Contempt* and *Infamy*.

His *Lordship*, when he heard the *Bird*
 Accost him thus, and call him *Lord*,
 Concludes some *Danger* must be near,
 For *Owls* are always full of Fear;

But

But looking round, and seeing none,
But a poor Bird there alone,
After a stately Nod or two,
He bids the Bird his Tale pursue,
Who thus proceeds: Would you be Great?
Shun the first Motives to Deceit,
And still in all you do or say,
Let Truth and Justice lead the Way,
He's only fit to guide a State,
That's wise, deliberate, and sedate,
And wears a brave unshaken Soul,
No Bribes can bend, no Threats controul;
But loves his Prince, and serves him too,
Not for Rewards, as most Birds do.

Such Birds as these, if such there be,
Would still preserve the Monarchy,
Calm all Divisions, and restore
Peace to the Groves as heretofore,
But how can this be brought about,
Till some new Method is found out,
Without a Change, all things in Course
Must ev'ry Day grow worse and worse,
Ruine and Tumults must engage,
Till Vengeance overtake the Age,
And our wild Factions weary'd out,
Force us at last to face about.

But oh! my Lord, we hope in vain
Our Peace and Glory to regain,
Whilst ev'ry Grove, and ev'ry Wood,
Swarms with a Mercenary Brood,

That for a *Cherry*, or a *Pear*,
Would *Heav'n* and all the *Gods* forswear,
Or to be made a *Lord* or *Knight*,
Renounce all *Thoughts* of *Truth* and *Right*.

I think I may without *Offence*
Appeal to any *Bird* of *Sense*,
If there be any thing in *Nature*
More odious than an *Upstart Creature*
That sticks at nothing to support
His *Pride* and *Grandeur* at the *Court*,
But huffs about and tyrannizes,
And neither *Truth* nor *Virtue* prizes,
Nor cares if *Half* the *World* were lost,
Provided he but keep his *Post*.

How shocking 'tis to see a *Jay*,
That was a *Scrub* but *Yother Day*,
Strutting about among the *Trees*,
Screaming at ev'ry *Bird* he sees:
And what is much more shocking still,
To see this *Patron* of all *Ill*
Perch'd by the *Royal Eagle's Side*,
Where with unsufferable *Pride*
The noisy *Fool* presumes to prate,
Like some *Prime Minister* of *State*,
And vilely fills his *Princess's Ears*
With his own *Jealousies* and *Fears*.

Nor is this *Jay* the *Bird* alone
That brings *Contempt* upon the *Throne*,
There are the *Hawks*, the *Rooks*, and *Kites*,
The *Storks*, those perjur'd *Hypocrites*;

And

And there the *Vultures* daily ply,
Fam'd for repeated Villany:
There are the *Bitterns*, *Herns*, and *Crows*,
And *Foreign Fowls* no *Native* knows:
There too the *Ravens* daily croak
Their sad Predictions from the Oak,
And there are *Cuckows*, *Daws*, and *Pies*,
Inventing, or dispersing Lies.
There flock the *Woodpeckers* and *Tits*,
That *Sharps*-like live by their Wits,
And there, to make the Story short,
Are *Birds of Prey* of ev'ry Sort:
These are the *Eagle's* *Body-Guard*,
And Day and Night keep *Watch and Ward*,
To fright all other *Birds* away,
Whilst they *Devour*, or *Snack* the *Prey*.

And now, Sir, I would ask of you,
What can this hamper'd *Eagle* do?
If he indulge their greedy *Crave*
With all his choicest *Hops* and *Hops*,
And daily fill their craving *Guts*
With his best *Plumbs*, his *Pears* and *Nuts*;
He must exhaust himself so fast,
He will have nothing left at last,
And when all's gone, they'll serve no longer,
For *Rooks* and *Kites* will bear no *Hunger*
Upon the whole I cannot see
How he among 'em long can be,
Unless some *Accident* unseen
Ruine and him shall step between.

What heavy Crimes have brought this Curse A
Down from the Angry Gods on us for I find
I leave you Sir to recollect, But there are the B
And judge the Cause by the Effects And
For me; I don't pretend to pry too
Into this secret Policy; and indeed
There is a wondrous Change Indeed
But how at first it did succeed, or
Is still a Stratagem that lies W
Too deep for mean Capacities
For tho' there's some pretend to know And
It was concerted long ago, Are Birds of
And name the Time when Revolution
Stepp'd in to mend the Constitution
Yet I presume, however they prate, To fight
The Project had a nearer Date. Whilst they
But be that so, or be it not, Sir, now And
It has a World of Ill begot, What can this
A World of Tumult and Confusion, If he indulge
And must do more in the Conclusion With all his

The LINNET and the cheerful LARK,
That wont to chant around the PARK,
The sweet-tongued FINCHES and the THRUSH,
That oft have sung in ev'ry Bush.
The NIGHTINGALE and peaceful DOVE,
That long have charm'd and grac'd the GROVE,
And all good Birds of ev'ry Sort,
Are drivn to Groves remote from Court,
Where they in bitter Notes complain
To be thus treated with Disdain;

What

And

And will revenge, depend upon it,
Sooner or later the Affront;

Indeed when they are thus disgrac'd,
Misrepresented, and Displac'd,
Treated like Traitors, Thieves, and Spies,
And loaded with a Thousand Lies,
Without one single Proof to shew,
Such Hardships they shou'd undergo,
Is such a burning Aggravation,
It needs must raise their Indignation,
And force them with Regret to try
The last and only Remedy.

You know, my Lord, the Ears of Kings
In all Respects are sacred things;
What cursed Vermin then are those
That on their Princes dare impose?
Filling their Ears with dreadful Lies;
Of Plots and strange Conspiracies,
That never once were thought upon
By any but themselves alone.
Where, when, and how These Things will end,
To say no Mortal can pretend;
Only in this I will be bold,
Such Methods cannot always hold.

You needs must know how dang'rous 'tis
To use too oft such Practices;
For tho' great Points are sometimes got
By the Assistance of a Plot,
And very oft the Vulgar's Eyes
Have been diverted by Surprise;

Yet to repeat them o'er and o'er
Is no good *Policy*, I'm sure.

The OWL, who all this while had kept
Silence profound as if h' had slept,
Turning about his heavy Head,
I've heard, says he, all you have said,
And perfectly distinguish what,
Good Mr. BLACKBIRD, you'd be at,
And for an Answer tell you, Sir,
The more you'll stink, the more you stink.

What signifies your empty *Chat*
Of *Upstarts*, and the *Gods* know what?
Whilst wisely we secure the *Prey*,
Poor *Fools*, what can you do or say?
Nothing, but shew a feeble *Spight*,
Like Curs that bark, but cannot bite.

We are a bold and daring *Party*,
And to each other firm and hearty;
And tho' we sometimes scold and rave,
Who of the Spoil the most should have,
Yet when that petty Squabble's o'er,
Away we go to seek for more.

Whate'er we do, 'tis one and all,
Together we still stand and fall;
And not like you, when *Danger's* nigh,
Sneak off, and into Corners fly,
And rather than abide the *Storm*,
Cant and *Recant*, *Transform*, *Inform*.

Your *Friends*, I think, had once the *Pow'r*,
And might have kept it to this Hour,

Had

Had they had Sense or Resolution
 To put their Pow'r in Execution
 Instead of that, for Ends unknown,
 They treach'rously their Cause disown;
 As they would do (to save their Bacon) *And all*
 The Gods, if I am not mistaken.
 Your Rev'rence, sure, cannot forget
 When these good Birds in Council met,
 And were preparing to Debate
 The Preservation of the State,
 How on a sudden they fell out,
 Which way to bring their Scheme about,
 And made a strange confused Pother,
 Betray'd and Bully'd one another.

When they had got into their Claws
 The Prince, the Senate, and the Laws,
 And what is greater too than either,
 The Priests and Mob blended together,
 And wanted nothing to insure
 'Gainst all Events their present Pow'r;
 Did they not then discover All,
 And into deep Distractions fall?

You may deny it, if you please;
 But ne'er were Knaves or Fools like these,
 To let their Jealousy and Pride
 Themselves against Themselves divide,
 And what was more to their Disgrace,
 To Rail and Scold before her Face,
 Who took them from the lowest Tree,
 And plac'd them next Her Majesty.

Sure you must needs have heard the Story,
 How a Great Queen amidst her Glom, To put the
 Finding her self betray'd and slighted, Instead of
 By those in whom she most delighted, They were
 And all that she had long been doing, As they
 Quite disconcerted, to her Ruine, I if the Gods,
 With Pride and Indignation fir'd, Your Reven-
 Took it to Heart, and so expir'd. When these

Now, Sir, with your Philosophy, And were propo-
 Pray give me some good Reason why The
 We or our Prince such Birds should trust How
 That to themselves are so unjust Which way
 Who rave, and bawl, and change, and vary, A
 As things succeed, or things miscarry. Betray'd

'Tis true, with us there are some Birds, W
 Who, when they'd be made Knights, or Lords, T
 Or want a Pension, or a Place, And what is great
 Scold at each other Face to Face, The
 But then that's nothing but Design And want
 Some other Birds to countermine, Gainst all
 And hide from vulgar Comprehensions Did they
 The real Grounds of their Intentions: And into
 For when by this they gain their Ends, You
 The Quarrels o'er, and they are Friends. But not

We have indeed another Sort, To let their
 Which we will farther from the Court, P
 A Breed of old substantial Birds, And what
 That may, but will not, be made Lords; To
 If these once chance to take a Head, Who took
 They will be neither drove nor led, And plac'd

And

And truly we've enough to do
To keep 'em off from joining you;
For tho' they dearly love *Dominion*,
And are entirely of *Opinion*
That all your *Monarchies* and *Kings*
Are Words of Form, and needless things;
And I'll be bold, with all their Heart,
Would with the *Num'rous* *Issue* part;
Yet we can't win 'em to consent
To try the grand *Experiment* :
When that's propos'd, away they fly,
Bawling for *Right* and *Liberty*.

These are a stubborn Breed of *Fowl*
That will admit of no Controul;
And if they don't do what they please,
We never have one Moment's Ease;
And so, in short, to put things right,
We flatter them, but you we slight.

For you, when you begin to vent
Your Spleen against our *Government*,
We give it out, that you'd destroy
The Happiness we now enjoy,
And introduce a *Bird* unknown,
To come and sit upon the *Throne*;
And thus, Sir, we can never fail
To stop your Mouths whenever you *Rail*.
But then on them no Dirt will stick,
Altho' we throw it ne'er so thick,
And so we're forc'd, to change their *Notes*,
To stop great *Places* down their *Throats*.

Tho' I must tell you by the by,
'Tis with the most Reluctancy.

I must confess, there is a few
Among us we can spare to you,
Dull Tools, are good for nothing, but
To stalk about, and cram their Gut,
And when we want em, ten to one,
Are pluming of themselves at Home.
Five or six Brace, or more of these,
We will allow you, if you please,
For when we've Yea's and No's our Number,
The rest are only useless Lumber.

Thus far the Owl; the Bird replies,
We all your little Arts despise;
For tho' by Stratagem and Force
You from the Prince his Friends Divorce,
There is not the least room to doubt,
But he at length will find you out,
And by a just Resentment shew
Your Prince should not be treated so.

What, tho' your Friends are mounted high,
'Tis but a borrow'd Dignity,
That like a Taper under Ground,
Goes out almost as soon as found?
And what, tho' you're improv'd the most
Of any Owl that e'er had Poss;
So far improv'd, that there remains
Only some Likeness in the Brains?
Yet you perhaps may live to see
The Fall of Pride and Tyranny.

The

D

Great

Great are th' Advantages, my Lord,
High Posts and mighty Wealth afford:
But if they are not us'd with Care,
They're only Curses, and a Snare,
And like the Ivy round the Oak,
Do very oft the Mission choke,
As I could Instances produce,
A World, were they of any Use:
To mention one; there was a Don,
Renown'd for Quaint and Terms of Law,
Who by loud Chattering got to be
A Bird of no small Dignity:
This Scrub, to shew that Impudence
To ev'ry thing has some Pretence,
Resolves to go to Court, and try
To raise himself and Family;
As judging it the only Place
Fit for his Turn in such a Case.

Now, you must know, my Lord, that he
Was fam'd for Puns and Ribaldry;
Two Virtues much in Vogue among
Our modern Statesmen, old and young;
And have, if we'll believe Reports,
Been well esteem'd in sundry Courts:
Chiefly at one above the rest,
Where all that's done's a perfect Jest.

Being got to Court, the Fool began
To think that now his Work was done;
And so from playing antique Tricks,
Turns a Buffoon in Politicks:

And tho' he had no mighty *Gifts*,
Yet by his *Arts* and little *Shifts*,
He gain'd upon 'em there so far,
That he was made a *Senator*,
And soon admitted into *Pay*,
To help to catch, and share the *Prey*:
But see how the most trivial thing
Can *Upstarts* to *Destruction* bring!

As he one *Day* in the *Senate* sat,
And strenuously began to prate,
A *FALCON* that had never yet
Seen any *DAW* among 'em sit;
Nor, I believe, ever heard of *One*
In all his *Generation*,
That ever did for high aspire,
To be yclip'd *John Daw, Esquire*,
Hearing him rail, and make a *Stir*,
Calls him aloud to *Order* Sir;
Then turning to the *Turkish*, says he,
He's fitter for a hollow *Tree*,
The *Mansion* of his *Family*,
Than to sit here, and fill a *Place*,
Some *Bird* of better *Sense* should grace!

The *DAW*, who no *Assurance* wanted,
At this *Rebuke* at first was daunted;
But looking round, and finding some
Of his staunch *Friends* from *Court* were come,
Took *Courage*, and with all his *Might*
Began to rave, and scold outright.

At this stands up a modest *Quail*;
Says he, this is no Place to rail;
And if we suffer things to go
By *Noise* and *Tumult*, as they do,
There's not a *Bird* will hither come
That's worth a *Cherrp*, or a *Plumb*.

Sir, I am much surpriz'd to find
The meanest *Birds* of ev'ry *Kind*,
Cull'd from their *Breed*, and hither sent,
To fit with us in *Parliament*;
What this foretells I won't pretend,
But sure it must in *Ruine* end.

As for your Part, I'm here to prove,
That you have basely *brib'd* the *Grove*,
And got your self unduly chose
By mercenary *Rooks* and *Crows*,
And are in all *Respects* unfit
With *Birds* of *Probity* to sit,
And *Clamour* thus and *Domineer*,
As if you were establish'd here:
Therefore, my Motion, Sir, shall be,
That you be now expell'd this *Tree*.

On this arose a hot Dispute
As e'er fell out 'twixt *Brute* and *Brute*;
The *Pensioners* and *Birds* in *Post*,
Which always *Rail* and *Clamour* most;
As they are true to one another,
Bawl'd furiously to save their *Brother*;
But all their *Bawling* was in vain,
The *Bribery* was prov'd too plain.

(18)
And so they to the *Question* fell,
Whether they should this *Daw Expel*?
And carry'd the *Affirmative*,
An Hundred against Ninety five.
The Scrub disgrac'd, and thus turn'd out,
For *Food* and *Shelter* shirks about,
Or on some little *Country Steeple*
Sits *Kawing* to disturb the *People*.

My Lord, I only instance this,
To shew how fickle *Fortune* is;
Not that I have the least *Suspicion*
She'll ever alter your *Condition*;
Nor is it, *Sir*, in my *Intention*,
When I this *Jack-Daw's Story* mention,
To lessen you: I know, my *Lord*,
You are a *Meritorious Bird*:
Beside, this happen'd long ago,
So can have no *Regard* to you.

A *Bird* of your extensive *Worth*
Wants not a *Supplemental Bath*;
Your *Virtues* will enough supply
All your *Defects* of *Family*,
And your *Great Actions* will endure
Till Time it self shall be no more.
But then, my *Lord*, the *Case* is plain,
When *Upstart Vermin* *Titles* gain,
And strut about and *Tyrannize*,
And all things but themselves despise,
To be ill-bred, and basely born,
Exposes them to *Publick Scorn*,

And makes them odious to the *Birds*,
Tho' they be ne'er such mighty *Lords*.

I own, I'm startl'd when I find
The vilest of the feather'd *Kind*
Collected from each *Grove* and *Spring*,
And made *Attendants* to their *King*:
What mercenary *Birds* they are
The *Royal Eagle* thus ensnare,
I will, my *Lord*, submit to you,
Only with this *Remark* or two.

If *Consciences* are truck'd away,
Like other common *Ware*, for *Pay*,
And *Dame Religion* only made
A *Tool* to propagate the *Trade*:
If *Titles* can be bought and sold,
As they are often, I am told,
And if there's *fixt* and *standing Rates*
For *Senators* and *Magistrates*:
If ev'ry *Jack-Daw*, *Rook*, and *Kite*,
Can be prefer'd, and made a *Knight*,
And then for *Cherries*, *Pears*, and *Plumbs*,
Or other usual *Premiums*,
Be still advanc'd from *Post* to *Post*,
As he shall *Rail*, or *Bribe* the most,
It can be no *Surprize* to see
The vilest *Birds* on ev'ry *Tree*.

Who would not shun that wretched *Court*,
Where *Merit* meets with no *Support*:
And who would for *Preferment* try,
Where *Truth* and *Virtue* helpless lie.

Oh! Sir, it moves, I'll own to you,
My *Wonder* and my *Pity* too,
To see a mercenary *Brood*
Devour the *Royal Eagle's Food*.

But not to carry this too far,
And over-stretch the *Metaphor*,
I take it for a standing *Rule*,
That *Prince* must be a perfect *Tool*,
And runs a certain *Risque* to be
Betray'd, or made a *Property*,
That in *Affairs* of *Weight* depends
On *Strangers*, or his hired *Friends*.

I could some fresh *Examples* bring,
To shew the *Fate* of that poor *King*,
Who sees the restless *Vermin* strive
To ruine his *Prerogative*,
Under the scandalous *Pretence*
Of serving him for *Conscience*,
And yet can't make the least *Remove*,
To guard himself, and save the *Grove*.

You know, my *Lord*, not long ago,
There was a *Time* when it was so;
A *Time* when ev'ry *Hedge-Bind* strove
To get *Dominion* in the *Grove*,
And nothing was the common *Cry*,
But *Liberty* and *Property*,
And yet they did, as they do now,
Their *Faith* and strict *Allegiance* vow,
What after that, my *Lord*, befall,
Is needless now, and long to tell.

One thing indeed I can't forget,
When this poor Prince was in their Net,
And forc'd unwillingly to fly,
To save himself and Progeny;
How all these Birds from ev'ry Wood
Flock'd to the Royal Neighbourhood,
And would by no means be deny'd,
Till they forsooth were dignify'd.
Among the rest an Owl was One
Grew Great from Revolution.

His Lordship who but ill could bear
To hear the Bird make things so clear,
Enrag'd replies, If this be true,
'Tis owing to your Tribe and You:
You first the Pulpit Trumpet sounded,
Which so the Springs and Groves confounded,
That all the Birds, both Wild and Tame
To the great Forest frighted came,
Swearing, (tho' most of them had none)
They'd die for their Religion.

'Twas you the Party War began,
Which blindly still you carry on,
Without considering that by this
You only do us Services.
In short, you are a Brood of Creatures
Prone to Confusion by your Natures:
Sometimes you're Low, and sometimes High;
Now this ways, then you that ways fly;
And I'll be bold, not one in three
In the same Principles agree.

Upon the whole, the *Case* is plain,
You serve your *Gods* and *Prince* for *Gain*;
And would, to stuff your greedy *Crams*,
Renounce them both, and all their *Laws*.
I have but this one thing to mention;
Remember, Sir, that *Comprehension*,
The only thing on Earth you dread,
Hangs now directly o'er your *Head*.
You see already what is done,
And what we still are carrying on,
And may depend it won't be long
Before you're forc'd to change your *Song*.

*Thus having spoke, away he cursing flew,
And the poor Bird to the next Grove withdrew.*

